

# Enlightenment or the great awakening

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The Great Awakening Effect on the Colonies. The Great Awakening refers to the movement of religious revival which swept over the American Colonies, particularly New England, between 1730 and 1745. It was characterized by great religious fervor and prayer. It had a profound effect on the ideological development of the colonies and paved the way for the American Revolution.

The Great Awakening: Effect on the Colonies.

The Great Awakening had its roots in England. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 unequivocally established the religious preeminence of the Church of England. This led to a complacency which reduced religious services to a matter of form. In reaction, a new spiritual renewal, “characterized by great fervor and emotion in prayer,” (Great-Awakening. com) was begun by the Wesley brothers and George Whitefield. This movement of religious revival, which crossed the Atlantic and swept over the American Colonies, particularly New England, between 1730 and 1745, is termed The Great Awakening. George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards were the most prominent preachers of this movement.

The Great Awakening greatly impacted the ideological development of the Colonies. Unlike the earlier doctrine of the Puritans, the new doctrine promised the grace of God to all who experienced a desire for it. It emphasized greater intimacy with God and encouraged overt emotional expression. More importantly, a personal approach to salvation took precedence over church dogma. This undermined the authority of the church leaders and transferred power to the congregation. A large number of new religious denominations were formed. Ironically, this splintering of the hitherto dominant Puritan and Anglican groups led to a unification of the

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American Colonies and the birth of a “ national consciousness” and an American identity. The Great Awakening was the ideological root of the American Revolution, as it effectively undermined the belief that the monarchy was sanctioned by God. The movement engendered the notion of a consensual government and the belief that State rule was a contract of the government with the people. Individualism in religion formed the basis for the desire for political independence. The Great Awakening united the colonists in anti-Catholic sentiment. This later metamorphosed into a deep anti-British fervor. The colonists realized that just as religious power lay in their own hands, so also could they take on the reins of government. The ideology of self-governance was an off-shoot of the Great Awakening.

References.

The Great Awakening. Analysis and Information on the First Great Awakening.

Great-Awakening. com. n. d. 18 November 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.great-awakening.com/>